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Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Executive
THRU: Assistant Director for Collection and Dissemination
FROM : Management Officer
SUBJECT: Records Management Program for CIA

DATE: 14 September 1949

I. Discussion

A. The Problem

1. The requirements for space, equipment and manpower to care for the records of CIA have been increasing rapidly and present many new and complex problems. The latest statistics as to files and filing equipment in the agency were obtained from a partial inventory in August 1948. It is known that the totals have increased greatly. The inventory revealed:
 - a. Over 6,100 pieces of filing equipment, worth \$560,000 were in use in offices;
 - b. Of these items 5,363 were letter and cap-size filing cabinets and safes, valued at \$414,000;
 - c. Over 62,000 square feet of office space were required, at a cost of \$125,000 annually;
 - d. Nearly 42,000 cubic feet of documents were in files;
 - e. Nearly 18,000 cubic feet of these documents were records of permanent value;
 - f. Less than 10% of the records would be ready for transfer to the National Archives by July 1952;
 - g. Less than 5% of the records would become inactive for storage in the CIA inactive records center by July 1949.
2. The partial program of records administration established under Administrative Instruction [redacted] dated 13 July 1948, is not adequate to cope with the rapid increase in documents filed by the agency. A solution can be reached by the development and implementation of a complete program to embrace the whole records management problem throughout the Offices and Staff Sections of the agency.

B. Historical Background

1. Congress has recognized the necessity for agencies of the Federal Government to establish and maintain continuing controls over their records for the purpose of preserving those of permanent

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value and systematically disposing of those documents no longer required. The Records Disposal Act of 7 July 1943 (57 Stat. 380) provides the definition of "records" and establishes severe penalties for willful and unlawful destruction, damage, or alienation of any record of the Federal Government. The Act states:

"the word 'records' includes all books, papers, photographs, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by any agency of the United States Government in pursuance of Federal law or in connection with the transaction of public business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that agency or its legitimate successor as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the Government or because of the informational value of data contained therein."

Specifically exempted from the definition of "records" are:

"Library and museum material made or acquired and preserved solely for reference or exhibition purposes, extra copies of documents preserved only for convenience of reference, and stocks of publications and of processed documents..."

2. Executive Order 9784, dated September 25, 1946 requires, among other things, that the head of each agency establish and maintain an active, continuing program for the effective management and disposition of its records and for the maintenance of physical custody over and retention of only those records that are needed in the conduct of current business.

3. Large collections of records have accumulated in all of the Federal agencies. Some agencies have developed records management programs which have materially reduced the unnecessary accumulations in those agencies. The Hoover Commission on Reorganization of the Federal Government noted these effective programs in its report and made extensive recommendations for the development of similarly effective programs in all agencies. The report points out the savings possible from sound efficient management of records and recommends enactment of laws to require agencies to maintain effective records management programs.

4. In CIA the groundwork for an efficient records management program has been laid. Many phases of the program have already been undertaken. However, greater emphasis has been given to the development of operating activities of the growing agency, with relatively less stress on records management activities. In order to increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and economy of operations it is now necessary to establish a complete, records management program for the creation, use, control, and disposition of records throughout the Offices and Staff Sections

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C. Elements of a Records Management Program

1. The Hoover Commission report states that the minimum content of a records management program in any agency should include tested controls on record making, record keeping and selective records preservation. The essentials of a complete program include the following activities:

a. Creation or acquisition of records

(1) Determination of the necessity for creation or acquisition of records and reviewing acquired material for proper distribution.

(2) Elimination of unnecessary duplication through analysis of files and filing activities.

(3) Analysis of correspondence to streamline preparation through use of procedural guides, limitation of copies and use of form or pattern letters and paragraphs.

(4) Development of controls on forms and reports with a view to simplifying and improving the design, arrangement or function, reducing the number of forms.

(5) Control the frequency of preparation of reports, and determining the methods of filing and final disposal.

b. Management of current records

(1) Conduct periodic inventory of all records.

(2) Designation of offices of record to contain the official files in locations chosen for administrative efficiency and permitting the elimination of duplicate files.

(3) Designation of files needed for convenience of reference as unofficial files or offices of information.

(4) Development of comprehensive records retention and disposal schedules approved by the National Archives and Congress.

(5) Development of agency disposal tables to include the approved retention periods for records and paging retention periods for non-record materials.

(6) Development of standard filing systems and procedures.

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(7) Development of standards for filing equipment and supplies.

(8) Approval of requisitions for additional filing equipment and supplies, to control, procurement and issue and to achieve uniformity.

(9) Installation of labor-saving devices including microfilming, tabulating equipment, etc., to simplify filing, the accumulation of recorded data and to reduce filing space.

(10) Review of physical factors affecting the efficiency of records handling activities including layout, lighting, and equipment.

c. Management of inactive records

(1) Development of procedures and controls to effect the systematic segregation and transfer of inactive records of permanent value to the agency, National Archives or to other government agencies and the transfer of records of temporary value to a central depository for the agency.

(2) Creation of a central depository for all inactive records of the agency and for the storage and distribution of surplus copies of publications.

(3) Development of controls to insure the destruction of unnecessary documents as provided for in Disposal Tables.

D. Records Management Program for CIA

1. The records management program planned for CIA embraces all of the essential elements outlined above. These elements as applied to CIA are described in more detail in the following paragraphs:

a. Centralization Versus Decentralization of Records Management Control and Supervision

(1) Some agencies establish a fairly large Records Management Staff which attempts to develop and install an agency-wide records management program without delegating any portions of the work to operating activities. In other agencies, the whole responsibility is given, by agency directives, to operational offices with no provision for a central supervisory staff.

(2) Though the large central-staff method can produce excellent results, the spread of the program through the

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agency is gradual and sometimes new problems arise faster than old ones are solved. Complete decentralization of the responsibility to operational offices, on the other hand, usually results in no real achievement, or perhaps an effective program in only a few offices.

(3) The program in CIA requires a small Records Management Staff to develop the several phases of the program and to supervise, advise, and assist records officers in operational offices in placing the improved methods into effect.

b. Records Management Training

(1) The CIA program will entail changes in procedures for record making and record keeping. Proper training must be given those who will execute the program. The required training will be developed and presented by the Records Management Staff in conjunction with the Training Division, Personnel Office, and the Management Office.

c. Creation or Acquisition of Records

(1) Offices and Staff Sections of CIA must determine the need for records from the standpoint of their operations. The Branches of OCD assist by determining sources of required data, creating records or copies of records, collecting documents, coordinating requirements, providing a central index and control point for records, and advising top executives of duplicating or overlapping requirements and of priorities required.

(2) The records management program in conjunction with other activities of CIA is concerned with the need for acquiring or creating records from the viewpoint of record making, record keeping and disposal. Records management analyses determine whether the number of copies of documents received or reproduced are the minimum number required, whether documents received as voluntary contributions should be distributed (as indicated by recipients of such documents) whether distribution lists are current and whether efficient filing systems are employed. Studies of reports assist in reducing the labor of preparation, limit the number and frequency of preparation of reports and simplify the problems of disposal.

d. Management Of Current Records

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(1) Annual expenditures for clerical time, space and equipment for the creation, control, and filing of current records are large. The purpose of records management is to develop and install efficient means of making and keeping the records required, and of segregating systematically, inactive and unneeded records for disposition. The various phases of current records management are discussed in the following paragraphs:

(2) Files and filing equipment inventory

(a) A complete inventory of files and filing equipment must be taken and the information kept current by additional periodic inventories. Data obtained from inventories are tabulated on punch cards to simplify analysis. The inventory provides detailed information as to types and volume of records and of filing equipment. It reveals unreasonable accumulations and duplicate files of inactive records and non-record materials in offices. The information facilitates the development of records disposal schedules and the control of records and equipment.

(3) Designation of offices of record and information

(a) Offices of record to contain the official files of CIA are established by the Records Administrator in locations convenient to offices having primary interest in the documents filed. Copies of such records, which are kept only for convenience of reference are filed in locations designated as offices of information. By designating the official files and offices of information, administrative efficiency can be promoted and considerable savings made in space, equipment and clerical time.

(4) Retention and Disposal Schedules and Disposal Tables

(a) Information contained in the inventories assists in determining retention periods for each series of records currently being filed in the agency. Retention periods are established by the Records Administrator with approval of the operating offices concerned.

(b) When the needs of the agency have been determined for each of these records series, retention and disposal schedules are prepared for sub-

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mission to Congress through the National Archives. When the retention periods have been established, Disposal Tables are developed by the Records Management Staff, listing each series of records with the approved periods of retention, so that administrative action can be taken to keep the volume of records at a minimum.

(c) Disposal periods for non-record materials are determined jointly by the Records Administrator and the office concerned but do not require approval by the National Archives and Congress. Retention periods for non-record materials are included in Disposal Tables.

(d) Reports of volume of records destroyed are required of the agency by the National Archives. To prepare such reports and to assure that prompt measures are taken by CIA activities to dispose of records in accordance with the Disposal Tables it is necessary for offices of CIA to report to the Records Administrator when they have made disposals of records.

(5) Standardization of filing systems

(a) A simple, efficient filing system to be used throughout the agency is desirable. A uniform system permits mass training of new employees, simplifies orientation of employees transferred to other offices, and speeds the work of filing and locating records in the agency archives.

(6) Standardization of filing equipment and supplies

(a) Standardization of filing equipment and supplies is necessary for efficient and economical operations. Uniformity permits expansion of file series without changes in systems or equipment, and simplifies the problems of accounting, procurement and storage of supply items. Uniformity of appearance of equipment, including style, color, and especially overall dimensions is desirable.

(b) The Records Management Officer makes inspections of files to insure that the proper type of filing equipment is used for particular filing problems and recommends to the Management Office requisitions for additional items of equipment or unusual types of filing supplies.

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(7) Labor-saving devices

(a) One aspect of records management is the installation of labor-saving devices such as modern microfilming, tabulating equipment, etc., to simplify filing and the accumulation of recorded data and to reduce filing space. The Machine Methods Branch of OCD has been assigned the responsibility of investigating, developing and adapting machine processes for identifying, collating, reproducing, and communicating intelligence data. The Branch provides advisory services as to the best use of special equipment and business machines for these purposes. The Branch will coordinate all such developments with the Management Office.

(b) The Records Administrator is responsible that special equipment is used when necessary, and that the best use is made of special equipment when applied to the tasks of filing and reduction of filing space. Of particular concern is the use of microfilming as an aid to administrative activities, for preparation of copies of documents for security reasons and for reducing the space required for storage of records having continuing value. The experience of the Machine Methods Branch is used in selecting the best types of such equipment.

(8) Work flow and work conditions

(a) Records management under supervision of the Management Office includes study of work flow in the handling of records. Proper layout of file rooms with good working conditions, promotes efficiency of filing operations.

e. Management of Inactive Records

(1) Provision of a storage place for inactive records is a common problem. The normal reluctance to destroy records for fear of need for future use results in the continued expansion of the archives.

(2) A single storage location should be provided for inactive records, providing proper security for classified documents, satisfactory conditions of light, heat, and ventilation, adequate floor-load capacity and located to permit large movements of records into and out of the area with a minimum of handling. Such a combination of requirements is rarely met in basement and attic locations.

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(3) More important than mere storage of inactive records is selective segregation of useless records for destruction and arranging of valuable material to facilitate reference. Records management strives to retain in storage only those records which have real continuing value, to transfer records of permanent value to the National Archives or other government agencies at the earliest practicable date, and to insure that records retained by the agency are stored efficiently, arranged in proper order and adequately indexed.

II. Conclusions

1. An efficient and complete program of records management is required in each agency of the Federal Government by Executive Order 9784, dated September 25, 1946. This program is necessary to insure that the agency retains in its custody only those records that are needed in the conduct of its current business and that all other records are promptly transferred to storage or disposed of in accordance with law.

2. Under the technical supervision of the Management Office, the Records Management program for CIA should provide for:

- a. Centralized supervision and control of the program by a small agency records management staff, which operates through records officers in each office and staff section in implementing the program;
- b. Continuing evaluation of the need for retaining records;
- c. Designation of offices of record to contain official files;
- d. Periodic inventories of files and filing equipment;
- e. Development of retention and disposal tables for records and non-record materials;
- f. Standardization of filing systems and equipment;
- g. Selection of mechanical aids to assist in reducing the cost of preparation and storage of records;
- h. The operation of a central repository or archives for inactive records.

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III. Recommendations

1. It is recommended that a complete records management program for CIA be adopted, to include all Offices and field installations of CIA.
2. It is recommended that the program be developed and implemented by the Assistant Director for OCD in conjunction with the Management Office.



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